CHARTER OF COMMITMENT
TOWARDS ECODESIGNING PLASTIC HORTICULTURAL CONTAINERS THAT PROMOTES THEIR RECYCLING

JANUARY 2023

VALHOR
TOUTES LES FORCES DU VÉGÉTAL

CHARTER OF COMMITMENT
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25 JANUARY 2023

Between

On the one hand, horticulture, floristry and landscape professionals through:

- **VALHOR,** French horticulture, floristry and landscape inter-branch organization, an association governed by the French Act of 1901, officially acknowledged via the French Ministerial Order of 17 August 1998, SIRET No. 431 985 183 00026, headquartered at 44 rue d'Alésia, TSA 41454, 75158 Paris cedex 14, FRANCE, duly represented for the purposes of signing the document hereof by Catherine Muller in her capacity as Chair;

On the other hand, plastic horticultural container manufacturers:

- **BACHMANN PLANTEC AG**
- **CEP**
- **CHAPELU FRÈRES**
- **DESCH PLANTPAK**
- **MODIFORM**
- **PÖPPELMANN**
- **SOPARCO**
- **TARPIN CHAVET**

Hereinafter referred to as co-signatories.

GENERAL
CONSIDERATIONS

1

HORTICULTURAL CONTAINERS USED TODAY BY HORTICULTURE, FLORISTRY AND LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS

Horticultural containers include **pots, small pots, trays, racks, hanging baskets, planters, trough planters.**

95% of the plastic materials used are PP[1] and recycled PP, followed by around 5% of recycled PS[2] and, lastly, to a much less extent, PET[3] and PLA[4].

The containers covered by this Charter of Commitment are plastic pots used for sowing, growing, transporting and selling horticulture, floristry and landscape sector products.

The total number of units is estimated at 770 million/year with a total weight of around 20,000 tonnes/year.

End-of-life plastic containers are owned by:

- Professionals for their activities – sowing and potting, breakage, batches that cannot be sold as they have defects, unsold items;
- And private individuals, consumers.

Today, end-of-life horticultural containers are:

- for professional waste, sorted by special firms and then sent to a recycling pathway;
- for consumer waste, disposed of in the household packaging recycling bin or in the household waste bin and are generally sent for incineration or landfill due to the technical issues in sorting this packaging.

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[1] PP: acronym for polypropylene
[2] PS: acronym for polystyrene
[3] PET: acronym for polyethylene terephthalate
[4] PLA: acronym for polylactic acid

2

A HIGH LEVEL OF EXPECTATION FROM CONSUMERS

The subject of plastic has become a key issue in society and consumers are now demanding sustainable production and consumption processes, which reduce the use of plastic in packaging and which ensure raw materials are recycled.

3

A RAPIDLY-CHANGING REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

European and French regulations are increasingly stringent when it comes to plastic, with in particular:

- the European Directive on single-use plastics (2019);
- the French Circular Economy Act (2020);
- the 3R plastics strategy in France (reduce, reuse, recycle) for 2025, 2030 and 2040;
- CITEO's eco-modulations imposing penalties on specific plastics that are non-sortable/non-recyclable, non-recycled or do not contain recycled material;
- the extension of sorting guidelines to all plastics;
- the 2025 introduction of extended producer responsibility (EPR) for professional packaging.

This regulation is designed, in particular, to increase the material reuse and recycling of packaging.

4

A COMMITMENT FROM THE FRENCH HORTICULTURE, FLORISTRY AND LANDSCAPE INTER-BRANCH ORGANIZATION FOR A VIRTUOUS PLANT SECTOR

By definition, plant professions are characterized by very strong environmental connotations and the legitimacy and credibility of the horticulture, floristry and landscape sector are partly related to its environmental performance.

If plastic pots are used so much in horticulture, it is because they boast a host of qualities and, to date, no other product exists that can replace it for all the services it renders: sturdiness, resistance over time, water movement, UV filtering and protecting roots from the light, adaptability to the automation of specific horticultural tasks, support for marketing and regulatory signage, etc. And, first and foremost, it is a production and transportation tool that is a 'must' today.

VALHOR intends to find sustainable solutions for using plastic for the first link in the sector, production:

- By, firstly, looking for alternatives to current-day plastic pots, such as the use of containers made from biosourced materials, developing reuse and even a deposit-return system, as well as totally eliminating pots (selling bare-root plants or plants in compacted clumps of soil);
- And, secondly, by improving container recyclability so their recycling becomes commonplace in the near future.

In 2021, the inter-branch organization initiated an ecodesign strategy for reducing the use of plastic and for increasing used plastic container recycling.

5

A LONG-STANDING COMMITMENT FOR HORTICULTURAL CONTAINER MANUFACTURERS

French and European plastics manufacturers have all been working, including some for over twenty years, on the development of plastic materials and additives for making pots as well as on likely alternatives to plastic. They have tailored their offer and new materials have arrived on the market such as pots made with recycled or biosourced materials.

Today, the horticultural container industry is capable of reaching 100% of recycled material reused in its production.

Around 95% of horticultural pots used by the sector are made of polypropylene (PP), a material that is totally and easily recyclable. Furthermore, three quarters of horticultural pots placed on the French market contain 60% to 100% of recycled plastic (sourced from industry scrap or from post-consumption waste).

As such, it is one of the few industries capable of reincorporating 100% of recycled material into its production and, in turn, of manufacturing new products that do not use any virgin raw material of fossil origin.

Some manufacturers have also worked on reducing the plastic content of horticultural containers by 30 to 40% thanks to technological breakthroughs and innovations in equipment and materials.

Finally, some have developed product ranges that comprise biosourced materials such as coconut fibre, wood fibre, potato starch, rice husk, etc. These novel product ranges are currently undergoing technical testing to ensure they can be used in plant cultivation and their life cycle will also be analysed.

ARTICLE 1

MUTUAL COMMITMENTS

The objective the co-signatories aim for is to ensure that plastic horticultural containers sold in mainland France are recycled as much as possible and that their ecological footprint is reduced to a minimum whilst keeping the economic impact of these measures under control.

As such, the co-signatories have agreed to the following:

ARTICLE 1.1 / COLLABORATION

The co-signatories endorse the objective of increasing container waste recycling, the quest for alternatives and work together to roll out measures intended to achieve this, each in their own area of responsibility.

ARTICLE 1.2 / SORTABLE PLASTIC CONTAINERS

The co-signatories undertake to ensure that, **by 1st January 2024 at the latest,** every plastic horticultural container that falls under the scope of this Charter and that is likely to be collected with household packaging be deemed sortable in French sorting facilities. To this end, plastic horticultural container manufacturers comply with the recommendations issued by the COTREP (French Technical Committee for the Recycling of Plastic Packaging).

To achieve this objective, the co-signatories are committed to eliminating carbon black, a pigment that disrupts optical sorting performed by infrared equipment in sorting facilities[5]. The co-signatories ensure that the replacement colour additive meets French sorting facility specifications and COTREP recommendations. The other additives should ensure the density of plastic containers remains at less than 1, the threshold required for flotation sorting of the items concerned in recycling facilities.

ARTICLE 1.3 / ELIMINATING POLYSTYRENE

The co-signatories undertake to gradually eliminate polystyrene from horticultural containers **by 1st January 2025 at the latest.**

The elimination of polystyrene is intended to increase the volume of horticultural containers recycled by making it easier for users to sort: given the difficulty of visually distinguishing between polypropylene and polystyrene, there is a risk that, if the two materials are kept, they may be mixed and, as such, reduce the recycling volume.

[5] Carbon black is a pigment that is commonly used in industry. It may therefore be present in minute quantities in the recycled material used to manufacture new pots; this is not considered an issue within the framework of the Charter hereof provided that these carbon black residues do not affect pot detection by infrared equipment in sorting facilities.

ARTICLE 1.4 / KEEPING SINGLE MATERIALS

The co-signatories undertake to keep containers made from a single material[6], as at present, as this is the most favourable scenario for recycling horticultural containers.

ARTICLE 1.5 / USING RECYCLED MATERIALS

The co-signatories agree to pursue best practices for using recycled materials and to increase said materials in the output of horticultural containers.

Today, three quarters of horticultural containers comprise 60 to 100% of recycled plastic.

For containers that do not comprise biosourced materials, the aim is to reach a minimum of 75% of recycled plastic materials in the plastic used in horticultural containers **by 2030,** if there is enough recycled plastic material to supply all sectors that request this material.

ARTICLE 1.6 / SEEKING THE BEST ECO-FRIENDLY SOLUTIONS

VALHOR will carry out an independent life cycle analysis on recycled, virgin plastic horticultural containers and on existing biosourced alternatives to highlight the best eco-friendly solutions to recommend to Inter-branch members for producing pot plants, and will also take the conclusions of work carried out by technical centres for research and experimentation, such as ASTREDHOR, into account.

Co-signatory pot manufacturers will provide the data required for carrying out this life cycle analysis.

ARTICLE 1.7 / DURATION OF THE PARTIES' COMMITMENT

The Charter hereof commits the signatory parties until 31 December 2030.

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[6] Horticultural containers are mainly made from a single material that corresponds to over 95% of the composition and that technically enables this main material to be sorted and recycled pursuant to applicable standards. Horticultural containers also contain a colour additive, a matrix for mixing the pigment and may also contain some traces of other plastic materials (for example a bit of PE in a pot mainly comprising PP).

ARTICLE 2

THE FRENCH HORTICULTURE, FLORISTRY AND LANDSCAPE
INTER-BRANCH ORGANIZATION'S COMMITMENTS

VALHOR undertakes to promote the collection and sorting of used plastic horticultural containers to improve their recycling. To this end, VALHOR is currently working hand-in-hand:

- for professionals' used plastic containers, with A.D.I.VALOR, a volunteer eco-organization without approval, recognized by the public authorities and in charge of recycling agri-supply products since 2001;
- for private consumers' used plastic containers, with CITEO, an eco-organization approved by the French State for recycling household packaging, and with the Association des Maires de France et des présidents d'intercommunalité (AMF - French National Federation of Mayors and Inter-municipality Chairs).

VALHOR undertakes to communicate:

- sector commitments to plant sector professionals so that the best practices promoted in the Charter hereof may be disseminated (choice of materials for containers, ecological footprint of these choices);
- to plant sector professionals so that they can facilitate sorting with their employees and their customers as much as possible;
- to the general public by presenting sector commitments.

ARTICLE 3

PLASTIC CONTAINER
MANUFACTURERS' COMMITMENTS

Container manufacturers undertake to offer product ranges that meet the aforementioned commitments whilst ensuring the horticultural containers can be used in plant cultivation.

Container manufacturers undertake to pursue and to play a role in establishing a win-win partnership with the French horticultural sector to ensure reasonable quantities for producers and to seek new sources of new raw materials (biosourced materials) and recycled materials (of various origins, from post-consumption and from industrial sources).

Container manufacturers undertake to provide the elements required to assess compliance with Charter commitments (pursuant to Article 4.3).

ARTICLE 4

GOVERNANCE AND CHANGES TO THE CHARTER

ARTICLE 4.1 / STEERING COMMITTEE

A Steering Committee (SC) comprising co-signatory representatives is set up once the Charter has been signed to monitor the performance of the commitments hereof. It comprises at least two people representing each co-signatory:

- the Chair (or the Managing Director), or their duly appointed representative;
- the person in charge of the operational monitoring of the commitments contained in the Charter hereof.

They can be assisted, as much as required, by other people, including external providers, based on the subjects addressed in the agenda.

The Steering Committee meets at least once a year and as often as necessary as soon as a co-signatory so requests. VALHOR acts as the Secretariat. As such, any request to convene a Steering Committee meeting beyond the minimum number of meetings per year must be made in writing to VALHOR.

All decisions that are to be taken by the Steering Committee must be attained by unanimity by the votes cast by the co-signatories. Co-signatories have one vote each. The absence of a co-signatory during a Steering Committee meeting will not block decision-taking. This absence will be deemed an abstention.

ARTICLE 4.2 / CHANGES TO THE CHARTER

Each co-signatory may request for changes to be made to the Charter of Commitment in writing (email with acknowledgement of receipt) to the other co-signatories. The change in question is reviewed by the Steering Committee and is adopted unanimously by all co-signatories.

The Steering Committee meets within six weeks of one of the co-signatories making known its request to change the Charter to the other co-signatories.

The new version of the Charter is signed by all co-signatories then made available to everyone.

ARTICLE 4.3 / ASSESSMENT

The co-signatories assess the performance of the commitments through an annual review carried out on the anniversary date of the first signing of the Charter hereof.

Moreover, any commitment for which a schedule is set by the Charter hereof is subject to a specific assessment 6 months before the deadline to ensure the commitment is on the right course with regard to the objective and the term set as well as a specific assessment one year after the deadline to observe the effects.

Assessments are based on sworn statements made by each party participating in the Charter hereof specifying the level of achievement of each objective for the commitment concerned. VALHOR will be responsible for coordinating the assessment.

ARTICLE 4.4 / ADMISSION OF NEW CO-SIGNATORIES

New co-signatories may be added to the Charter of Commitment hereof. To this end, the new co-signatory must make their request in writing to the Steering Committee that will validate their admission through a majority of votes cast. All new co-signatories sign the Charter, which is as such updated then made available to everyone.

ARTICLE 4.5 / TERMINATION

Co-signatories may request to withdraw from the Charter of Commitment hereof at any time by making a request in writing to the Charter Steering Committee. The Steering Committee Secretary is responsible for disseminating the information to the other co-signatories. As in the aforementioned case of adding a new co-signatory, any withdrawal of a co-signatory requires the Charter to be updated and to be made available to everyone.

ARTICLE 4.6 / RESPECT

The co-signatories agree that these commitments are not legally binding.

ARTICLE 4.7 / DATE OF EFFECT

The Charter hereof takes effect the day after it is signed by all parties and remains applicable as long as the commitments made by the co-signatories have not been fulfilled and assessed pursuant to the terms established here within.

ARTICLE 4.8 / COMMUNICATION

Co-signatories may communicate on having signed the Charter hereof, pursuant to the principles validated by the Steering Committee.

However, any change in the Charter hereof, any change in commitment and any assessment or review may only be communicated provided it has been unanimously validated by the co-signatories beforehand during a Steering Committee meeting.

Signed in Essen, 25 January 2023

VALHOR
TOUTES LES FORCES DU VÉGÉTAL

Catherine Muller, *VALHOR Chair*

BACHMANN GROUP

Name: Lainé

cep

Name: Pierre DAMBRICOURT

Chapelu frères créateur d'ambiance

Name: CHAPELU Eric

DESCH

Name: W. Zicht

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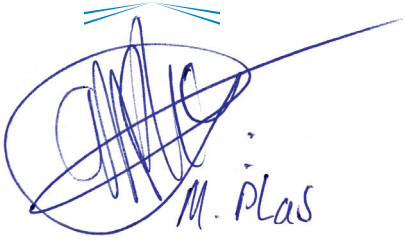

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